

2/11/80

Current Class: UNCLASSIFIED
Current Handling: n/a
Document Number: 1980BUENOS05595

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Channel: n/a

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ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-15 ADS-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-02 ICA-15 SP-02 PM-05 NSC-05
SS-15 SY-05 /107 W

-----114769 112151Z /66

P R 112038Z JUL 80
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5998
INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LAZPAZ
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ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

Declassify: () In Part () In Full

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 5595

ROME FOR VATICAN OFFICE

E.O. 12065: N/A

TAGS: SHUM, AR

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS SUMMARY - JUNE 29 - JULY 11, 1980

REF: BUENOS AIRES 5223

1. SUMMARY. THE BIG NEWS IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS WAS
THE GOA'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT IT PLANNED TO RELEASE 218
PRISONERS CURRENTLY HELD UNDER PEN (SEPTTEL). SEVERAL
MOTHERS GOA A PROISE FROM POPE JOHN PAUL II DURING HIS
VISIT TO BRAZIL. RELATIVES OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS
SUBMITTED A LIST OF 48 NAMES TO THE GOVERNMENT IN ORDER
TO GAIN SOME INFORMATION AS TO THEIR WHEREABOUTS.
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THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY DENOUNCES PRISON CONDITIONS. BOMB
ATTACKS ON JEWISH SCHOOLS WERE REPORTED. MORE JEHOVAH'S

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WITNESSES ARRESTED, BUT A CHILEAN JEHOVAH'S WITNESS WILL BE PERMITTED TO CONTINUE PETITIONING FOR PERMANENT RESIDENCY IN ARGENTINA. END SUMMARY.

2. PEN RELEASES. THE GOVERNMENT OF ARGENTINA ANNOUNCED JULY 8 THAT 218 PEN PRISONERS WOULD BE RELEASED AS SOON AS ADMINISTRATIVE CONCERNS WERE RESOLVED. THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS TIMED TO COMMEMORATE ARGENTINA'S DAY OF INDEPENDENCE (JULY9). OF THE 218 PRISONERS, 50 WILL BE GRANTED SUPERVISED LIBERTY, 16 WILL BE PERMITTED TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY, AND THE REMAINDER WILL BE SET FREE WITH NO LIMITATIONS. EMBASSY REPORTED ON THESE RELEASES IN DEPTH IN BUENOS AIRES 5530.

4. POPE PROMISES MOTHERS. ON JULY 5 THE MOTHERS OF 34 ARGENTINE DISAPPEAREDS WERE GRANTED AN AUDIENCE WITH POPE JOHN PAUL II IN PORTO ALEGRE, BRAZIL. THE MOTHERS PRESENTED A LETTER TO THE POPE WHICH ASKED FOR HIS ASSISTANCE IN FINDING INFORMATION ON THE WHEREABOUTS OF THEIR CHILDREN. ACCORDING TO THE MOTHERS, THE POPE PROMISED TO TAKE AN INTEREST IN THEIR CASES.

5. DISAPPEAREDS WHILE IN CUSTODY SOUGHT. A LETTER PRESENTED TO THE JUNTA BY RELATIVES OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS REQUESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNT FOR 48 PERSONS WHO HAD DISAPPEARED WHILE UNDER GOVERNMENT CUSTODY. SOME OF THE 48 DISAPPEARED WHILE AWAITING TRIAL, OTHERS ARE THOSE WHO WERE UNDER ARREST BUT NEVER HEARD FROM AGAIN, AND THOSE WHO WERE HELD UNDER PEN AND DUE TO BE RELEASED BUT HAVE NOT BEEN SEEN SINCE. THE LETTER INCLUDED THE NAMES OF THE 48 AND UNCLASSIFIED

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THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THEIR DISAPPEARANCES.

5. PRISON REFORM REQUESTED. THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY GAVE A PRESS CONFERENCE ON MAY 22 IN WHICH IT ADDRESSED ITSELF TO THE NEED FOR PRISON REFORM. RECENTLY THE ASSEMBLY HAS BEEN DISTRIBUTING TEXTS OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE AND EXCERPTS OF THE IACHR REPORT. THE REFORMS WHICH THE ASSEMBLY CALLED FOR INCLUDE: SYSTEMATIC DESTRUCTION IN PRISON OF THE MORALE AND HEALTH OF PRISONERS MUST BE STOPPED; PRISONS SHOULD ELIMINATE ALL FORMS OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT; PRISONERS SHOULD BE ALLOWED SOME FORM OF PHYSICAL EXERCISE

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WITHOUT FEAR OF PUNISHMENT; VISITS BY RELATIVES SHOULD BE FACILITATED; CONTACTS WITH MINISTERS SHOULD ALSO BE FACILITATED; NORMS FOR DISCIPLINE SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED TO RID THE PRISONS OF ARBITRARY PUNISHMENTS; STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO INSURE THAT THE PRISONERS' NUTRITIONAL NEEDS ARE MET; AND, PRISONERS SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO CHOOSE AND SEE THEIR ATTORNEYS.

7. BOMB ATTACKS. ON JULY 9 THE SAIA REPORTED THAT THERE HAD BEEN TWO BOMB ATTACKS ON JEWISH SCHOOLS. ACCORDING TO THE REPORT, ON THE MORNING OF JULY 5 A BOMB EXPLODED IN FRONT OF THE ORT TECHNICAL SCHOOL IN ALMAGRO, THE EXPLOSION CAUSED SOME DAMAGE TO THE SCHOOL'S BUILDING. ANOTHER BOMB WAS FOUND IN THE J.K. BAILIK CENTRAL SCHOOL IN VILLA CRESPO, BUT WAS DEFUSED. THE DAIA ISSUED A STATEMENT WHICH SAID THAT THESE ATTACKS WERE /SYMPTOMS OF AN INCREASE IN THE ACTIVITY OF ANTISEMITIC GROUPS..."

8. WITNESSES ARRESTED. THIRTY-FOUR MEMBERS OF THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES SECT WERE ARRESTED ON JULY 10. THE 34, INCLUDING 32 WOMEN AND CHILDREN, WERE ATTENDING A LECTURE ON JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES' PHILOSOPHY WHEN THEY WERE ARRESTED. THEY ARE EXPECTED TO BE RELEASED SOON.
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9. A CHILEAN CITIZEN AND MEMBER OF THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES WHO HAS BEEN PETITIONING FOR RESIDENCY IN ARGENTINA HAS BEEN TOLD BY THE COURT THAT HE WILL BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE HIS EFFORTS, EVEN THOUGH HE HAD BEEN TURNED DOWN BY ANOTHER COURT. THE SUPREME COURT RULED THAT THERE WAS NOT SUFFICIENT EVIDENCE THAT BY MERELY BEING A MEMBER OF THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES BARRED ONE FROM BECOMING A RESIDENT OF ARGENTINA AND THAT THE PETITIONER COULD REINTRODUCE HIS PETITION. CASTRO

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